

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the title, specification and claims 1-4, 8 and 13 are amended. No new matter is added.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 13-14 are allowed and that claims 2 and 4-12 contain allowable subject matter. However, because claim 1 is deemed allowable for the reasons discussed below, these dependent claims are not placed in independent form at this time.

Applicant also appreciates the courtesies shown to Applicant's representative by Examiners Kauffman and Nerbun in the October 13, 2004 personal interview. Applicant's separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

In the Office Action, claims 3, 8 and 13 are objected to. Claims 3, 8 and 13 are amended consistent with the Examiners' suggestions to overcome the noted minor informalities. The specification is correspondingly amended. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 4,406,045 to Russell in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,913,276 to Kurono et al. (Kurono). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed and agreed upon during the October 13 personal interview, the third position in independent claim 1 has been clarified to recite a third stop position, which is farther away from the shuttle than the second stop position.

With this structure, the picker is capable of holding a needle thread extending from an eye of a sewing needle near a shuttle. Furthermore, the picker is movable between a first stop position where the picker is capable of holding the needle thread, a second stop position spaced farther away from a shuttle than the first stop position, and a third stop position spaced farther away from the shuttle than the second position. The third stop position, for example,

provides a position that allows easier replacement of the bobbin (Applicant's page 1, lines 25 to page 2, and page 3, lines 8-14).

As agreed upon, Russell fails to teach or suggest such combinations of features and stop positions. Russell discloses a sewing machine comprising a thread picker 15 provided for trimming a thread and pivoted between a thread engaging position as shown by dotted line in Fig. 1 and a thread trimming position as shown by solid line in Fig. 1. Russell discloses nothing about a shuttle and accordingly the relationship between the picker 15 and the shuttle. Although Russell may be capable of movement between the first and second positions, it fails to teach or disclose movement to a third stop position spaced farther away from the shuttle than the second stop position. Consequently, the claimed invention distinctly differs from Russell.

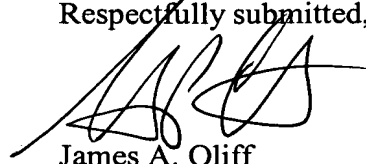
Kurono et al. (Kurono) fails to overcome various deficiencies of Russell. Kurono disclose a multihead sewing machine comprising a full-turn shuttle 59. However, Kurono et al. fail to disclose the construction corresponding to the picker recited in claim 1. Thus, Kurono also fails to teach, disclose or suggest the recited first, second and third stop position of a picker.

Therefore, as agreed upon, claim 1 is allowable over the cited references. Claim 3 is allowable for its dependence on base claim 1 and for the additional features recited therein. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-14 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff  
Registration No. 27,075

Stephen P. Catlin  
Registration No. 36,101

JAO:SPC/ldg

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**OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC**  
**P.O. Box 19928**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22320**  
**Telephone: (703) 836-6400**

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